YOUR GUIDE FOR PREPARING A QUALITY WELFARE-TO-WORK COMPETITIVE GRANT APPLICATION

Employment and Training Administration
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Introduction

> *"If we expect to be the country we want to be in the next century, we have to provide opportunity for everyone who's willing to work for it, we have to require responsibility from everyone who's capable of providing it, and we have to find a way to come together across all the lines that divide us to make one America."*
> *-- President Bill Clinton, August 12, 1997*

> *"People want work. Their hearts and hands ache for the dignity and respect work brings. They want to show their children that they are achieving. And they want to be recognized for what they are -- not old welfare recipients, but new workers."*
> *-- U.S. Secretary of Labor Alexis M. Herman, February 17, 1998*

By submitting an application for a Welfare-to-Work competitive grant, you are participating in an historic effort to help reduce poverty and dependency, and provide the hardest-to-employ welfare recipients with opportunities to achieve self-sufficiency and dignity. This process is intended to solicit ideas and approaches to serving Americans in need, and we anticipate that there will be many more good ideas and applications than the U.S. Department of Labor will be able to fund. Therefore, we thank you for your commitment, and wish you success in preparing your application.

Purpose of this Guide

This Guide is designed for use in conjunction with the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) #DFA99-003 that was published in the Federal Register in late January 1999,[1] announcing the availability of funds to be awarded on a competitive basis to Private Industry Councils (PICs), political subdivisions (cities and counties), and private entities under the Federal WtW initiative. The SGA contains additional information and three forms that must be submitted with an application. This Guide is intended to help applicants prepare a good, complete application. It should only be used **with** the SGA; applicants should not regard it as a substitute for that official document.

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[1] The complete SGA is available on the Welfare-to-Work Home page, *http://wtw.doleta.gov.*

An Overview of Welfare-to-Work

The Federal WtW initiative is a critical component of our nation's effort to reform welfare. Its goal is to help States and communities provide transitional employment assistance as a way to move hard-to-employ welfare recipients into lasting, unsubsidized work.

In August 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, a comprehensive, bipartisan welfare reform law that requires work in exchange for time-limited public assistance for families moving from welfare to work. Under the new legislation, the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program was replaced by a system of block grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The TANF program, which is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, establishes a five-year lifetime maximum for receiving welfare benefits.

Because additional resources were deemed necessary to help move long-term welfare recipients into jobs, the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, which the President signed into law in August 1997, provides $3 billion in grants over two years to support State and local efforts to help individuals make the difficult transition from welfare to work. The WtW program focuses on those with significant barriers to employment, including individuals without a high school diploma, public housing residents, those in need of substance-abuse treatment, or others with characteristics that States determine to be predictive of long-term welfare dependency. It emphasizes "work-first" and only authorizes vocational skills training after an individual is placed in a permanent job or transitional employment such as work experience, community service, a subsidized job, or an on-the-job training program.

Part I: Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grants

The Purpose of Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grants

Approximately 75 percent of the WtW funds to be awarded in fiscal years 1998 and 1999 will go directly to States based on a formula that considers their poverty population and number of adult TANF recipients. States are required to pass on 85 percent of their grant funding directly to Private Industry Councils (PICs), which oversee job training programs at the local level. States may use the remaining 15 percent of State formula funds for WtW special projects of their choice. States are also required to provide $1 in non-Federal funding to match every $2 of Federal funds. PICs have broad discretion to tailor programs to the needs of local populations.

The WtW legislation also authorizes the Department of Labor to award approximately 25 percent of WtW funds on a competitive basis directly to PICs, political subdivisions of States (county and city governments), or private entities which apply in conjunction with a PIC/political subdivision. The intent is to seek a broad pool of community-based applicants, including many who may have never before applied for a Federal grant. Competitive grant projects are expected to be an integral part of a more comprehensive strategy to move eligible individuals into unsubsidized jobs.

Competitive grantees should develop innovative approaches that enhance a community's ability to move individuals into self-sustaining jobs, foster upward mobility and higher earnings, and improve a community's long-term ability to keep former welfare recipients successfully employed.

In the current round of WtW grant competition, **the Department of Labor is interested in proposals that focus on five targeted populations: noncustodial parents; persons with disabilities; persons requiring substance abuse treatment; victims of domestic violence; people with Limited English Proficiency.**

Competitive grant projects are expected to serve at least 100 participants in rural areas and cities with high concentrations of poverty. Most grants will be awarded between $1 million and $5 million, to be used over a period of 18 to 30 months. Funds may be used for a variety of services, including: job readiness; work experience, community service, job creation or other employment activities; job placement; post-employment services such as skills training and mentoring; job retention services such as transportation and child care assistance; non-medical substance abuse treatment; short-term housing assistance; as well as intake, assessment, and case management services.

[**NOTE**: All applications must meet the requirements set forth in the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) published in the Federal Register. Although this Guide is designed to help you understand the requirements of the SGA, it is not a substitute for that official document.]

Process for Evaluating and Selecting Competitive Grant Applications

Competitive grant applications are evaluated on the basis of five key factors:
1) The relative need for funding in the local area;
2) The degree of innovation represented by the proposed project;
3) The proposed goals and outcomes of the program;
4) The level of collaboration and integration of local resources into the project; and
5) The applicant's capacity to deliver such services and manage a large Federal grant.

All complete applications will be reviewed and objectively rated by a panel according to all of the elements of the five criteria listed below (and in the published Solicitation for Grant Application). For those projects focusing on one of the five target populations mentioned above, a separate panel of experts will be convened to review the proposals.

Panels make recommendations to the Grant Officer in the Employment and Training Administration within the Department of Labor. The Grant Officer will make final decisions on awards based on factors such as the panel's findings, the geographic distribution of the applications, a reasonable distribution of funds among the targeted populations and other areas of interest identified in the SGA, and the availability of funds. In Rounds 1 and 2 of the WtW competition, there were many more highly rated proposals than there was available funding.

Evaluation Criteria:

The SGA includes specific criteria for the evaluation of competitive grant proposals, with a certain maximum number of points assigned to each criterion. Every application will be reviewed against the same evaluation criteria. Prior to submitting your proposal, you should review the criteria and evaluate how well your proposal addresses each of the five, which are listed in the published SGA and are outlined below:

1. Relative Need for Assistance [20 points]
- ✓ the concentration of poverty and long-term welfare dependence and the lack of employment opportunities in the project service area [up to 9 points]
- ✓ the extent of gaps in the capacity of the local infrastructure to effectively address the employment barriers which characterize the targeted population [up to 6 points]
- ✓ the responsiveness of the project design to the other areas of interest identified in Part III of the SGA [up to 5 points]

2. Innovation [20 points]
- ✓ the extent to which the project incorporates new and better strategies for moving welfare recipients into lasting unsubsidized employment leading to economic self-sufficiency (e.g., new ways for participants to access services; for local organizations to collaborate; for replication of successful strategies in a new setting)

3. Outcomes [25 points]
- ✓ the quality of the proposed employment and earnings outcomes [up to 10 points]
- ✓ how well the proposed plan of services responds to identified needs, to the employment barriers faced by the target group and to local conditions, as well as the likelihood that the proposed service strategy will result in the proposed outcomes [up to 12 points]
- ✓ the reasonableness of the level of investment in relation to the proposed outcomes [up to 3 points]

4. Local Collaboration and Sustainability [25 points]
- ✓ how well the project is coordinated with the WtW State formula and existing competitive grants and TANF grant activities, and is supported by the PIC or political subdivision and TANF agency [up to 4 points]
- ✓ the extent and quality of local community partnerships that are involved in and making substantial contributions of resources to the project [up to 11 points]
- ✓ the involvement of and participation by local employers [up to 5 points]
- ✓ the extent to which the community and/or the local area has developed plans and commitments to maintain and expand the capacity to serve the target population with local resources over a sustained period of time [up to 5 points]

5. Demonstrated Capability [10 points]
- ✓ the extent to which the applicant and its partner organizations demonstrate a history of successfully serving a comparable target group, the extent of use of current and former welfare recipients in the provision of services, and the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the ability to effectively execute grant management responsibilities.

Bonus. Serving Residents of Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities

[up to 5 bonus points][2]
✓ projects in which a majority of participants live in Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities (EZ/ECs) [The proposal must name the EZ or EC; the applicant does not need to be located in the EZ or EC.]

Who is Eligible to Apply for a Grant?

The Department of Labor is interested in receiving proposals from a variety of agencies and organizations. Following is a list of the entities eligible to submit applications for Welfare-to-Work competitive grants:

- Private Industry Councils (PICs), political subdivisions of States (county/city governments), and private entities who apply in conjunction with a PIC or political subdivision are eligible.

- Private entities (i.e., non-profit or for-profit organizations including community development corporations, community-action agencies, community-based and faith-based organizations, disability community organizations, public and private colleges and universities, and other private or public organizations that are neither PICs nor political subdivisions of a State) may apply in conjunction with the PIC or the political subdivision(s) for each area in which the project is to operate. This means that an application must include a signed certification by both the applicant and either the PIC(s) or political subdivision(s) indicating that consultation has occurred while developing the application and that proposed activities in the application are consistent with, and will be coordinated with, Welfare-to-Work efforts of the PIC(s) or political subdivision(s). (You should allow 30 days for the PIC or political subdivision review.)

- All proposals must be submitted to the Governor (or Governor's designee) for comment. At a minimum the Governor should be given fifteen days to comment on the proposal.

- The regulations governing eligibility, the Interim Final Rule for the Department of Labor's Welfare-to-Work program, were published November 18, 1997 in the Federal Register as 20 CFR Part 645. The regulations are on the Internet at: *http://wtw.doleta.gov/linkpages/regs.htm.*

Who is Eligible to be Served Under the Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grants?

The Welfare-to-Work initiative takes a new approach to providing assistance for people who have multiple barriers to obtaining employment and achieving self-sufficiency. Below is a synopsis of the regulations governing eligibility for the WtW programs (Interim Final Rule for Welfare-to-Work, 20 CFR Part 645):
- At least 70 percent of funds must be spent on hard-to-employ individuals with two of three employment barriers, who have been long-term welfare recipients or who face termination

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[2] This criterion will be considered by the grant officer for proposals that are deemed competitive.

from TANF within 12 months. Barriers include: lack of a high school diploma or GED *and* low reading or math skills, substance abuse, and a poor work history.

- Up to 30 percent of funds may be used to serve TANF recipients with characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependence (e.g., school dropout, teen pregnancy, poor work history).

- In addition, noncustodial parents of minors who qualify are also eligible if they meet the specified barriers to employment or characteristics of long-term welfare dependency.

What Activities are Allowable Under the Welfare-to-Work Competitive Grant?

Only the specific activities listed below are allowable in competitive grant-funded programs:

- **Job readiness** activities funded through vouchers or contracts with public or private providers

- **Employment activities** such as: **Community Service** or **Work Experience** programs, **Job creation** through public or private sector employment wage subsidies; and **On-the-Job Training (OJT)**

- **Job placement** services financed through job vouchers or through contracts with public or private providers (subject to 50% holdback until in the workforce for 6 months)

- **Post-Employment Services** financed through job vouchers or through contracts with public or private providers (provided after individual is placed in subsidized or unsubsidized employment). May include: basic educational skills training, occupational skills training, English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) training, mentoring

- **Job Retention or Support Services** (*only* if not otherwise available to the participant). May include: transportation assistance, non-medical substance abuse treatment, child care assistance, emergency or short-term housing assistance, and other supportive services

- **Individual Development Accounts**

Part II: Application Requirements

Submission Requirements

Following are the requirements for submitting an application for a WtW competitive grant:

• Submit four copies of your application, one with an original signature.

• Applications must be single-spaced in (at least) 12 point type on single-sided, numbered pages.

• The project narrative should not exceed 20 pages; 10 additional pages of attachments may be included.

• Private entities must include (in Section 1) signed certifications of consultation with the appropriate PIC(s) or political subdivision(s) of the State.

• Applications must include comments from the Governor or Governor's designee) or evidence of efforts to consult. Or evidence that the proposal was submitted for review and that any comments resulting from the review were incorporated into the proposal.

• Applications must be received by *2 p.m. on April 30*, *1999* [see SGA for details]. No proposals or additional information will be accepted after this date.

Requirements for Section I: Project Summary

The Project Summary is the basic information that must be submitted with all WtW grant applications. You must complete all elements of this section or your application will be disqualified and will not be considered in the WtW grant competition. Though this section is mandatory, it is not the primary basis upon which applications will be evaluated. You should view it as a prerequisite to advancing to the competition. Section II: Project Narrative is the description of the project that the review panel will focus on in evaluating the proposals. Section II is where you fully describe the innovative and creative approach that you propose to bring to the delivery of WtW services in your community.

Be sure your Project Summary includes:

Page 1   The Application Cover Sheet can be found in Appendix B of the SGA. The cover sheet designates the applicant's name and affiliation and which (if any) of the targeted populations your proposed project will serve.

Page 2   Application for Federal Assistance, SF-424; be certain that this form is signed.

Page 3   Project Synopsis, ETA Form 9070

Pages 4-5   Executive Summary (limit: two pages) In your two-page executive summary, describe the points addressed on the Project Synopsis Form, particularly the target population that you intend to serve, the barriers that they face, and your service strategy for helping them obtain and retain jobs that can lead to self-sufficiency.

Pages 6-7   Budget Information Sheet and Budget Justification, providing narrative description and additional detail regarding the budget information

Pages 8-9   Evidence of consultation with Private Industry Council/political subdivision and the State

The Project Summary is required material and is not included in the application page limits.

Summaries of current grantee projects can be found on the Welfare-to-Work Web page at: *http://wtw.doleta.gov/competitive.htm.*

Requirements for Section II: Project Narrative/Statement of Work

A completed Section I of your proposal is your *passkey* into the proposal review process. It has little to do with whether or not your proposal is chosen – unless it is incomplete or contains incorrect information, in which case you are immediately disqualified from the competition.

Section II, however, is the *meat* of your proposal. In Section II you have an opportunity to shine – to tell the review panel exactly why your proposal should be selected for funding. In this Section you will explain the innovative aspects of your proposed project, your capability to partner with selected organizations to implement your plan, and the project's expected outcomes. The narrative should be concise, but contain enough detail to ensure that the readers understand your project activities and how you plan to accomplish your project goals. As you respond to each segment of Section II, keep in mind the evaluation criteria (pages 4-5) that serve as a guide for the review panel.

On the following pages you will find a side-by-side discussion of the application requirements for Section II. The requirements of the published SGA are presented in the left column. In the right column there is additional information about the requirements as well as practical suggestions regarding what to include in each section.

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1. Description of Service Area

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under

This section should carefully describe the geographic area that your proposed project is intended to serve. Your description should include information pertaining to the:

the "Relative Need for Assistance"
criteria.]

– Identify the specific political and
geographic jurisdictions (e.g., cities,
counties, subsections of cities/counties)
which are included in the service area
for the project.

– Identify the percent of the population
in the service area that has income
below the poverty level.

– Identify the percent of the population
in the service area that is receiving
TANF assistance.

– Identify the percent of the TANF
population that has received TANF or
AFDC assistance for 30 months or
more, or is within 12 months of losing
eligibility for assistance under State or
Federal law.

– Identify the most recent
unemployment rate in the service area.

– Describe the significant deficiencies
in the local area infrastructure that
represent significant barriers to moving

•   Area's geographical limits.
•   Poverty, welfare and unemployment statistics for the
        population.
•   Specific reasons why it is particularly difficult to
        move the area's welfare recipients into permanent
        jobs. (Refer to the "Relative Need for Assistance"
        evaluation criteria.)

Be specific in describing the targeted area – for instance,
describe a neighborhood or a Census tract rather than a city
or county (if applicable). The more narrowly targeted your
project is, the better you will be able to describe your target
population and the better you can tailor project services to
their specific needs.

Some of the statistical data you will need is contained in the
Census Bureau's County and City Data Book which is
available at your local public library. Information specific to
a neighborhood or Census tract or block can also be found in
government repositories (e.g., City Hall; the County Office
Building) or your local TANF or social services agency. In
addition, this information may be purchased from the Census
Bureau through their Internet site:
http://www.census.gov/main/www.subjects.html.

Your local social service agency will be able to provide you
with information on poverty levels in your targeted area, as
well as on the TANF population. A good, collaborative
relationship with the social service agency is essential to the
success of your project. Working with them in planning
your service strategy will help to foster that relationship.

Child-only TANF cases (in which there is no custodial
parent) should be excluded from the percent of the
population receiving TANF, unless these cases are relevant
to the project target group (e.g., your project may be
targeting service to noncustodial parents).

The designated workforce development agency at the State
or local level will be able to supply information on
unemployment in the area you intend to serve. When you
call these organizations, contact the staff person responsible
for maintaining local Labor Market Information (LMI).

Explain the reasons that the services already existing in your

eligible recipients into permanent employment in an efficient manner (e.g., lack of transportation, labor market with a shortage of low-skill jobs, shortage of employers with appropriate employment opportunities, remoteness from health facilities, limited number of social and support service agencies).

area are not adequately meeting the needs of the target population. For instance:

- Why is existing transportation not getting poor people to jobs?
- What factors in the labor market cause a shortage of low-skill jobs that might be appropriate for the population you are planning to serve?
- Is there a shortage of employers in the area who can supply appropriate employment opportunities?
- Are the existing social services adequate and convenient enough to support members of the target population as they strive to become self-sufficient?

2. Summary of Strategy for Use of Welfare-to-Work Formula Funds and Existing Competitive Grants in the Local Area

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Local Collaboration and Sustainability" criteria.]

Most States have WtW formula grants, which are administered at the local level by a PIC or other organization. The purpose of this section is to explain how WtW formula funds are being used in the targeted area. In addition, many local areas across the country have already received competitive grants to serve local communities. (Refer to the "Local Collaboration" and "Sustainability" evaluation criteria.) Clearly describing the existing resources in your community will make it easier for you to describe how your project will complement these other resources and fill in gaps in the infrastructure described above.

– Identify the significant local and community organizations involved and their roles in providing assistance through the formula grant and existing competitive grants.

Identify any local organizations providing formula grant and competitive grant funded services in your target area and describe their roles in providing assistance. To learn the names of the entities that administer formula grant funds and competitive grant funds call your local PIC or the Regional Department of Labor office. A list of all PICs can be found on the Internet by searching under "JTPA Service Delivery Areas" at: *http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov*. A list of Regional Office WtW contacts can be found at: *http://wtw.doleta.gov*. A list of national grant office contacts appears at the end of this document under the heading "Other Resources."

– Describe how the proposed competitive grant project will supplement and enhance the capacity of the Welfare-to-Work formula grant and existing competitive grant activities to effectively serve eligible recipients in

Describe the services and activities funded under WtW formula and competitive grants in the area that you intend to serve. Be very specific in describing how your project would collaborate with the organizations providing those services. Collaboration and the establishment of a comprehensive local strategy are *crucial*. There should be no duplication of services!

the local area who have significant employment barriers.

3. Analysis of Target Group

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Relative Need for Assistance" criteria.]

– Describe the individuals targeted for assistance through this project, including any noncustodial parents, individuals with disabilities, individuals requiring substance abuse treatment, victims of domestic violence, or individuals with limited English proficiency.

– Describe the significant employment barriers which characterize this target group, including the process for identifying those participants who are least job ready.

4. Analysis of Employment

In this section, provide a detailed description of the people your project intends to serve – including the employment barriers they face. (Refer to the "Relative Need for Assistance" evaluation criteria.) In order for the remainder of your proposal to make sense, you have to know the characteristics of your target group and what specific barriers have kept them from joining the workforce in the past. The more clearly you describe their characteristics, the more easily you will be able to address their barriers later in your proposal.

Describe your target population including information on the targeted populations listed above: noncustodial parents, people with disabilities, persons requiring substance abuse treatment, victims of domestic violence or individuals with limited English proficiency.   Be sure to describe how you intend to recruit these special targeted populations into your project.

A good analysis of the employment barriers faced by your target population is critical for evaluating the need for grant assistance and the appropriateness of your proposed service strategy. In this segment, provide both a description of the significant barriers faced by your target population and your process for identifying those individuals within that group who are the least job ready. Describe your relationships with other organizations in the community that might be able to assist you in identifying and recruiting eligible WtW participants.

Keep in mind that, if you intend to serve noncustodial parents, recruitment will be particularly difficult. In addition to the court system and child-support enforcement authorities, you should work with the TANF agency to get data on child-only TANF cases, which could lead you to the noncustodial parent population. See Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 6-98, dated Sept. 21, 1998, concerning eligibility determination for noncustodial parents. The TEGL can be found on the Internet at: *http://wtw.doleta.gov/linkpages/tegl698.htm*

In this section you should demonstrate your knowledge of the variety of jobs in your service area that are appropriate and available for the population that you intend to serve.

Opportunities

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Relative Need for Assistance" criteria.]

– Identify the types of occupations in the local area which are being targeted as appropriate employment opportunities for the target group of this project.

– Describe the justification for the selection of the occupations in terms of their availability and the adequacy of expected placement wage and post-placement earnings potential to achieve self-sufficiency.

5. Service Strategy

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Innovation" and "Outcomes" criteria.]

– Identify the specific job readiness, placement (in both subsidized and unsubsidized employment), post-employment, job retention and/or support services to be provided with competitive grant funds as well as services to be leveraged from other sources.

– Describe the rationale for planned enrollments in activities in terms of the employment barriers, infrastructure deficiencies and employment opportunities previously identified above.

(Refer to the "Relative Need for Assistance" evaluation criteria.)

Your analysis of the labor market in the target area should be linked to both the employment barriers of the target population and the suitability of the available jobs (based on the skill level of the population). All identified jobs should eventually lead to wages and benefits that are high enough to be able to support a family.

Explain why you are focusing on the particular occupations you have chosen. Address the availability of jobs, the barriers faced by your target group, the adequacy of the placement wage and the expected earnings potential with the eventual goal being self-sufficiency.

This section is the "What" of your proposal narrative. In this section you should describe the services that you propose to provide in your project with competitive grant funds. (Refer to the "Innovation" and "Outcomes" evaluation criteria.)

Describe your proposed strategies for:
• Preparing program participants for employment;
• Placing them in jobs (subsidized or unsubsidized);
• Providing post-employment training and job retention assistance;
• Providing support services by using WtW funds and/or by leveraging services from other sources.

Additionally, you should describe, in very specific terms, how you will address the employment barriers of the target population. It may help you in writing this section to describe what a typical participant would experience in your program over the course of the grant.

Grant applications are evaluated in terms of how well the proposed service strategy is customized to the identified needs of the participants and the proposed outcomes, as well as the degree to which the outcomes are achievable. You should describe how your analysis of the target population and the labor market led you to the specific service strategy you have proposed. You should also describe how you collaborated with your community partners.

The WtW Program has a strong emphasis on job retention for participants. Longer term support services will be necessary to help participants retain jobs and advance. Be sure to describe these services and how they will address the barriers you have described for your target population.

This section is the "How" of your proposal narrative. In this section you should describe how you will assure that each participant receives the services you have proposed. Your description should particularly emphasize the relationships with other service providers and how clients will be referred from one organization to another. (Refer to the "Innovation" and "Outcomes" evaluation criteria.).

Provide a thorough description of the services that would be available to participants, and which organizations would provide them. This should include services that are available through the Welfare-to-Work formula grant, TANF or other sources. Also describe how you will create linkages and coordinate with organizations that provide services not allowed under WtW, such as pre-employment training.

– Also describe what individual support services, such as mentoring and case management, will be used to maintain participants in the program.

6. Service Process

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Innovation" and "Outcomes" criteria.]

– Describe the comprehensive service process that will be available to participants, and identify the organizations which will be involved in providing specific services/activities. The description should specify what elements of the service strategy are already available in the community, whether through the Welfare-to-Work formula program, the TANF program or from other sources, as well as the elements or services that will be funded through the Welfare-to-Work competitive grant award.

– Describe the specific methods which will be used by the grantee and the local TANF agency to coordinate and work jointly in providing the following services: outreach, recruitment, and referral of appropriate recipients for assistance through the project; assessment of skills and identification of specific employment barriers; counseling and case management; and support services.

– Applicants are strongly encouraged to develop good linkages to the local

Explain how you will coordinate and work in conjunction with the local TANF agency to:
- Publicize the program services to the target population.
- Recruit target group members into the program.
- Establish "Interagency Agreements" with organizations within the community that would be appropriate partners to enhance or supplement the program services;
- Refer welfare recipients to the program;
- Determine if individuals referred to the program meet the eligibility requirements.
- Assess the level of job readiness skills and identify the employment barriers of each program participant; and
- Provide individual counseling and case management as well as support services to ensure the success of program participants in meeting their employment

TANF agency in the development of their proposal. Although not required, applicants are encouraged to consult with and, where possible, to share their proposals with the local TANF agency to incorporate that agency's perspective into their proposed service process.

– Where vouchers for services are to be used, describe the process by which vouchers will be distributed and redeemed (in compliance with 20 CFR Sec. 645.230(a)(3)), including who will be eligible, how amounts of vouchers will be determined, and how the grantee will ensure that quality services are being provided.

goals.

Experience of early WtW competitive grants has shown that weak linkages to the TANF agency can cripple project implementation. Start working with the TANF agency early and continue to build on that relationship as you develop your proposal.

Welfare-to-Work places a strong emphasis on collaboration among service providers. It is very important to describe *all* organizations and sources of funds which will contribute to serving your target population.

Vouchers have frequently been used in employment and training programs to increase clients' choice of services. In general, the use of vouchers is a mechanism for the traditional employment and training system to involve more community-based organizations in serving hard-to-employ populations. If you intend to use vouchers, describe how they will be distributed and redeemed (in compliance with 20 CFR Sec. 645.230(a)(3)). Include information on how you will:
- Determine eligibility for vouchers;
- Determine voucher amounts; and
- Ensure that quality services are being provided.

A process flowchart and/or service matrix, such as the one shown on the following page, may be used to enhance this description.

SAMPLE SERVICE STRATEGY

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   REFERRAL / INTAKE / ELIGIBILITY        │
│            DETERMINATION                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│              ASSESSMENT                   │
│ not limited to the following: Basic skills, Occupational skills, │
│    Substance Abuse, Child Care, Transportation │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN (ISS/IRP)        │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
          ↙                    ↓
┌──────────────┐        ┌──────────────────────────────┐
│     JOB      │   →    │         WORK FIRST            │
│  READINESS   │        ├──────────────────────────────┤
└──────────────┘        │    JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES     │
                        ├───────────────┬──────────────┤
                        │  EMPLOYMENT   │ UNSUBSIDIZED  │
┌──────────────────────┐│  ACTIVITIES   │  EMPLOYMENT   │
│ JOB RETENTION &      ││ Community Service, │          │
│ SUPPORT              ││ Work Experience,  │           │
│ SERVICES             ││ Job Creation, OJT │           │
│ ( if not otherwise available to └───────────────┴──────────────┘
│   the participants)    │       ↕              ↕
│                        │┌──────────────────────────────┐
│ Transportation Assistance, │  POST EMPLOYMENT SERVICES │
│ Substance Abuse Treatment  │ Basic educational skills training │
│ (Non medical),             │ Occupational skills training │
│ Child care Assistance,     │ English as a Second Language │
│ Emergency/Short Term        │         Mentoring         │
│ Housing Assistance, Other  │└──────────────────────────────┘
└──────────────────────┘
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GOAL: Unsubsidized employment leading to economic self-sufficiency.

7. Integration of Resources

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Local Collaboration" and "Sustainability" criteria.]

– Identify specific financial and other resources and organizational/service provider capabilities which are being contributed to provide the full range of assistance to the identified target group for the project. At a minimum, describe the coordination and
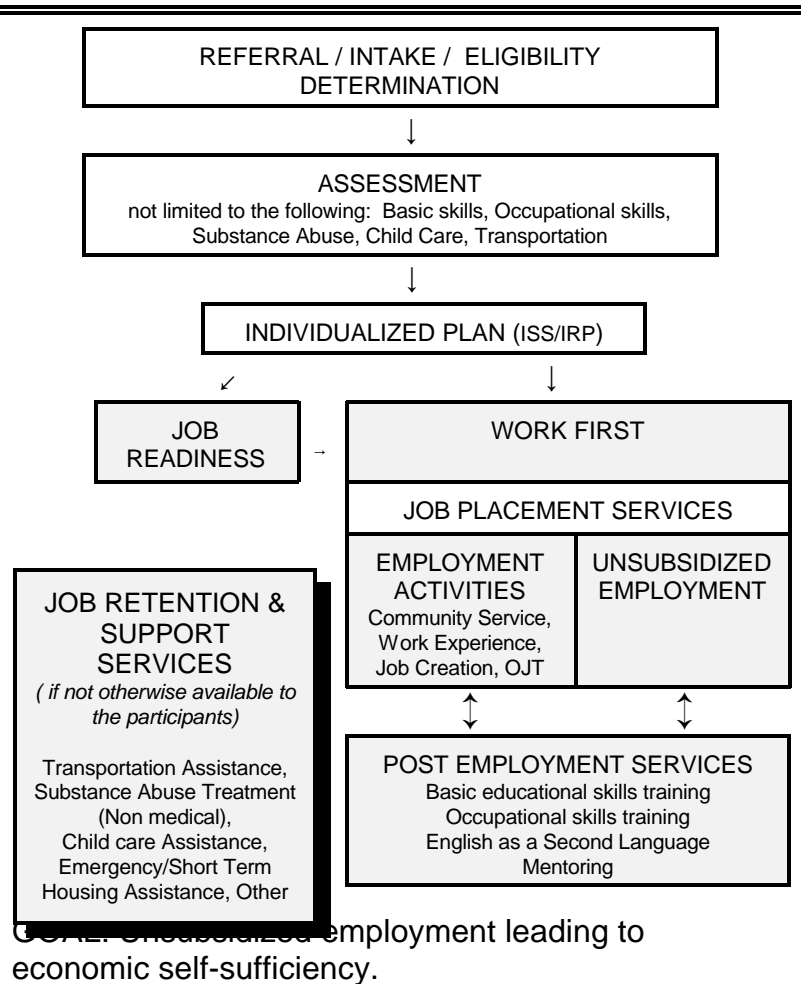
This section is the "Who" of your proposal narrative. In this section you should describe how the services offered by your proposed project will become an ongoing service option in your community after Federal funding runs out. This information is particularly important because sustainability is a principle of WtW. (Refer to the "Local Collaboration" and "Sustainability" evaluation criteria).

Identify specific resources (e.g., financial; staff; services; equipment; etc.) as well as organizational capabilities that are being contributed by other organizations in order to provide a full range of services to the target population. At a minimum, you should describe your coordination efforts with the following organizations and the contributions each will make to the project:
• Local JTPA service providers;
• Local TANF providers; and

contributions of local JTPA service providers, local TANF providers, and local housing and transportation authorities. In developing their plans, applicants are encouraged to be mindful of their obligations not to interfere with collective bargaining rights or agreements or to displace employees.

– Describe the process that will be used to maintain and expand the service structure in the local area and engage new partners after receipt of Welfare-to-Work competitive grant funds.

– Describe how the project will develop a sustainable capacity in the local community to effectively move welfare recipients into permanent jobs and to foster the long-term self-sufficiency of the target population. It is expected that project services will provide assistance oriented toward long-term solutions. It is also expected that the need for grant funds to provide this assistance will diminish over time, specifically in the latter stages of the grant performance period.

8. Employer Support

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Local Collaboration and Sustainability" criteria.]

– Describe the specific responsibilities and approaches for developing relationships with and support of area employers to generate a sufficient

• Local housing and transportation authorities.
As you develop your plan, be mindful of the obligation not to interfere with collective bargaining rights/agreements or to displace employees.

Developing a network is an ongoing activity – developing community partnerships does not end when you submit your application. Describe how you will continue to cultivate and expand your network. A broad network of organizations allows you to more effectively serve your participants and helps to ensure that the WtW project will be sustained after Federal funds run out. Although there is no matching or cost-sharing requirement for competitive grants, applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with other organizations to leverage outside resources.

Describe how you will develop a *sustainable* community-wide capacity to move welfare recipients into permanent jobs and eventually to self-sufficiency. Without coordi-nation among the many organizations in your community that provide services to your target population, your program will end when the funding runs out. The Department of Labor wants to ensure that this does not happen. Therefore, the expectation is that your proposed service strategy will be based on long-term solutions that involve all facets of the community. Additionally, it is expected that, during the life of the grant, your need for grant funds will gradually decrease and be replaced by local resources.

Employers are key to the success of WtW. Take care to describe how you plan to obtain employer support and what role employers will play in your project. (Refer to the "Local Collaboration and Sustainability" evaluation criteria.).

In this section describe the approaches you will use for developing relationships with employers. This is an important aspect of your proposal because you will need to generate enough appropriate unsubsidized jobs for your participants. In your description, include a discussion of how you will encourage employers to customize jobs to meet work-related needs of the participants placed with them such as child care and flexible work schedules. Incentives for employers to hire welfare recipients include the WtW and the Work Opportunity Tax Credits as well as subsidized

number of unsubsidized employment opportunities for the target group. Specifically describe how employers will be encouraged to customize employment opportunities to meet work-related needs (e.g., child care, flexible work schedules) of recipients.

– Identify the employers in the local area who have made commitments to the project and describe the types of commitments made (e.g., number and types of jobs, contribution of employer resources for post-hire support services and/or training).

9. Planned Outcomes

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Outcomes" criteria.]

– Identify and justify planned performance for the comprehensive service strategy on the following measures: number of participants to be placed into unsubsidized employment; average earnings at placement in unsubsidized employment; expected average earnings one year after placement in unsubsidized employment; and cost per placement in unsubsidized employment. In addition, where applicable, for those services supported specifically by Welfare-to-Work competitive grant funds, describe specific process or outcome objectives for those services. The application may include other measures and planned performance levels as deemed appropriate by the applicant. If these

training for new employees, subsidized wages, investment in the community through hiring of welfare recipients, and good corporate citizenship.

Describe specific commitments to provide specific jobs (e.g., Firm A and Firm B have each committed to hiring 85 people). Also include employer commitments to provide post-hire training and/or support such as transportation. Although you may want letters of commitment on file, do not submit them with your application. Information and ideas about involving employers can be obtained from the WtW Partnership. Their Web site is *http://www.welfaretowork.org*.

In this section, describe the outcomes you expect and *why they are plausible*. If you did a good job describing your target group, and your service strategy addressed the barriers that you identified, your outcomes should be a natural outgrowth of your proposed integrated services and partnerships. (Refer to the "Outcomes" evaluation criteria.)

Discuss the outcomes that you have identified as plausible and reasonable. Your outcomes should be justified for your service strategy on the following measures:
- Number of participants to be placed into unsubsidized employment;
- Average earnings at placement;
- Expected average earnings one year after placement; and
- Cost per placement.

Also, discuss the specific process or outcome objectives for WtW competitive grant-funded services. If you include any other planned outcomes, briefly describe their relevance to the project.

The Department of Labor understands that it may cost more to provide a comprehensive array of services for a hard-to-serve population. As long as the level of service that you are providing is proportionate to the costs, the costs will be seen as reasonable.

Keep in mind that WtW is not a termination-based program. The Department of Labor expects that participants will be

are included, the applicant should briefly describe their relevance to the project.

placed in subsidized or unsubsidized employment activities, and will continue to receive supportive and other post-employment services, as well as training, while in their jobs. Only when participants have no further need for WtW services should they be terminated from the program.

The purpose of this section is to describe precisely *how* and *when* your proposed project will be implemented. (Refer to both the "Outcomes" and "Innovation" evaluation criteria.)

The focus here is on how you and your partners plan to implement the project within the first 60 days after receiving a grant. You should describe what you will do, and in what time frame, to get your project "up and running." From experience with the first round of competitive grantees, DOL has learned that WtW programs require more time to get off the ground than other employment related programs. The more thought and planning that is built into your process up front, and the closer your relationship with the PIC and TANF agency, the more likely you are to succeed in the first crucial months of implementation.

10. Implementation Plan

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Outcomes" and "Innovation" criteria.]

– Identify the critical activities, time frames and responsibilities for effectively implementing the project within the first 60 days after the award of the grant.

Also provide an implementation schedule showing:
- Estimates of participants to be enrolled in the program at what intervals;
- Estimates of enrollments in specific activities at any given time;
- Expected number of placements in unsubsidized employment; and
- Expected number of terminations.

Recruitment of eligible participants will be critical to successfully reaching your project goals. Be sure to have contingency plans for recruiting eligible WtW participants.

– Include an implementation schedule showing the number of participants, enrollments in allowable activities, placements in unsubsidized employment and terminations.

Although the Department of Labor wants to attract applicants with a good track record, newcomers to the Federal grant process are encouraged to apply. In this section you will describe why your organization is able to manage – both financially and administratively – a large grant. (Refer to both the "Demonstrated Capability" and "Innovation" evaluation criteria.).

11. Project Management Plan

Describe and document your ability to administer a grant.

– Applicants must be able to document that they have systems capable of satisfying the administrative and grant management requirements for WtW grants as defined in 20 CFR Part 645.

– Include a project organizational chart which identifies the organizations, and staff, with key management responsibilities and the specific responsibilities of each organization;

– Describe the specific experience of the applicant and other key organizations involved in the project in serving individuals with significant barriers to employment. The information should include, at a minimum, specific projects or grants, a comparison of the characteristics of individuals served to the target group for this project, and the employment outcomes which were achieved. In addition, applicants should provide the names and address of the last three grantors, both public and private, from which the applicants received funding.

– As appropriate, describe how current or former welfare recipients will be used to provide services.

– Describe the procedures which will be used to obtain feedback from participants and other appropriate parties on the responsiveness and

Include in your discussion information regarding the experience that both you and your partners bring to the table. Through experience, the Department of Labor has learned that tracking the split in funds spent on the 70%/30% target populations can be difficult. When describing your grant management capabilities, be sure to address your organization's capacity to collect and report on this administrative information.

Also include a chart identifying the organizations with which you are partnering and all staff who hold key management responsibilities. Describe the specific responsibilities of each organization and relevant staff members as they relate to the grant.

Be specific in describing your experience, and that of your partners, in providing employment and support services for people with significant employment barriers. Include a description of projects or grants which you or your partners have operated and/or administered. Compare the characteristics of previous program participants to the target group for this project and describe the outcomes of those programs. Provide as references the names and contact information of your three most recent public and/or private grantors. In order to make awards to the most competent organizations, the Department of Labor reserves the right to contact your previous grantors.

If you intend to include any current or former welfare recipients in your service strategy, describe their anticipated involvement in this section. In particular, describe how the characteristic skills and experiences of former welfare recipients will add to the quality of your proposed project.

Providing excellent customer service is an important goal of the Department of Labor. In order to reach that goal, it is necessary to hear directly from the customers regarding how well they think the objectives of the programs are being met and the level of effectiveness and responsiveness of the program services. Describe the feedback process you will use to gather this type of information from your participants and stakeholders.

The Department of Labor has received a number of inquiries

effectiveness of the services provided.

regarding the populations targeted by WtW competitive grant applicants, the types of services being proposed, the level of need at the local level, and the demand for WtW funding. The Department would like to be able to respond to requests of this sort with information derived from WtW Round 3 competitive grant applications.

– Applicants should also be advised that the Department of Labor may use information included in applicant's proposals to document the nature of the Welfare-to-Work applicant pool, as well as the range and depth of perceived service needs in the Welfare-to-Work population.

An important aspect of competitive grants is that these funds allow for hundreds of "research" labs around the country to discover models that work, creative solutions to common problems, or the best mix of services to assist long-term welfare recipients. These grants allow the Department of Labor to determine the best ways to move long-term welfare recipients into jobs that will enable them to become self-sufficient. The Department wants to fund promising new approaches that can be replicated elsewhere. (Refer to the "Innovation" evaluation criteria.)

12. Innovation

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Innovation" criteria.]

Innovation is entirely subjective! The purpose of this section is for you to make the case that, in your local area, your proposed project will be a new and innovative way to help your target population meet their employment goals. As you develop your plan, keep in mind that coordination and collaboration with agencies and organizations that serve your target population is an important component of the competitive grant projects. Equally important is proposing a service strategy that *enhances* rather than *duplicates* existing services. Also use this section to make a convincing argument that your plan is *realistic* – for instance, if you propose new ways of working with employers, be sure that you will actually be able to implement your plan.

– Recipients of Welfare-to-Work competitive grants are expected to use creativity and innovation to help eligible individuals obtain long-term unsubsidized employment and economic self-sufficiency. The application should describe how the proposed approach represents an innovative method for achieving the employment objectives of the project. Proposed strategies should represent an improvement over, or a variation on, approaches that have traditionally been used in the project service area to assist welfare recipients and other low-income unemployed individuals.

As previously mentioned, competitive grants are used to demonstrate new service strategies. The Department of Labor is very interested in sharing best practices and lessons learned throughout the workforce development system. This section is your opportunity to explain how you will share the knowledge you gain through implementation of a competitive grant-funded project.

– Grant recipients are also expected to share knowledge which they develop through the use of innovative approaches. Applicants should

Community saturation projects propose to serve 100 percent

describe how they will report lessons learned in the course of the grant implementation, and further, describe their plans for disseminating the knowledge they have gained.

13. Additional Requirement for Community Saturation Projects

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominately under the "Outcomes" and "Innovation" criteria.]

– Community saturation projects must describe why a saturation strategy is appropriate and feasible.

– Projects must identify local partners who will be involved in implementing the saturation strategy, the services that they will provide, and the dollar value of their contributions.

14. Additional Requirements for Projects Targeting High Priority Populations

[Information provided in this section will be evaluated predominantly under the "Relative Need" and "Local

of the eligible population within a designated service area. In other words the community is completely saturated with services. (Refer to the "Outcomes" and "Innovation" evaluation criteria.)

In this section, explain why you believe that the *saturation* strategy is the best approach for your community. In competitive grant-funded projects, it is expected that *all* partners will contribute service and/or financial resources. This is particularly important in urban areas where competitive grant funds are not sufficient to serve the large numbers of participants who would be eligible in cities with high concentrations of poverty. If you intend to propose this type of project in an urban area, explain in detail what resources your partners will contribute. Projects designed to serve targeted communities, neighborhoods, or even blocks within a large city should certainly *consider* implementing a saturation strategy.

Given that WtW has very narrow eligibility criteria, a strong community saturation proposal would describe good coordination and linkages with other programs (such as TANF and JTPA) to ensure that those individuals not eligible for WtW will be served by other programs or sources. Saturation projects should also be limited to an extremely narrowly defined geographic area, such as a specific neighborhood or census tract, so that the project is manageable and measurable.

Projects targeting specific high priority populations should describe what services they will provide that are specifically aimed at addressing the needs of those populations.

The populations targeted in this SGA often have specific organizations or public agencies that have experience in addressing their unique characteristics. These public and private entities will be critical to the effective service of your target population.

When targeting a specific population, it is critical to know whether there are sufficient numbers of WtW-eligible TANF recipients who are in that population. Work with your local TANF agency and other organization to make the case that

Collaboration and Sustainability"
criteria.]

For those projects targeting services to noncustodial parents, individuals with disabilities, individuals requiring substance abuse treatment, victims of domestic violence, or individuals with limited English proficiency:

– Describe the specific services to be provided that address the unique characteristics of the targeted population;
– Describe the specific partner organizations who have experience serving the targeted population or who will be key to the recruitment of the population into the project; and
– Describe the prevalence of the targeted population within the eligible WtW population in the local area(s) to be served by the project.

there is a large enough population for you to serve with your project.

[**NOTE:** All applications must meet the requirements set forth in the Solicitation for Grant Applications (SGA) published in the Federal Register. Although this Guide is designed to help you understand the requirements of the SGA, it is not a substitute for that official document.]

Ways to Strengthen Your Proposal

- Fully address all 5 evaluation criteria – points are based *only* on the 5 criteria plus bonus.
- Organize your application in the *exact same order* as the SGA.
- Start early – developing a project plan and writing a proposal can be *extremely* time consuming
- Customize your service strategy to the target population *and* the local labor market.
- Make sure your service strategy supports your proposed outcomes.
- Demonstrate familiarity with your existing local programs and partner organizations.
- Build a strong relationship with the local TANF agency.
- Demonstrate that your partners are "on board" – don't propose to *establish* partnerships.
- Be succinct – don't use twenty pages if you don't need them!
- Revise your proposal based on comments from the (mandatory) PIC/political subdivision and State reviews.
- Distinguish your program as *WtW specific* – not just an adaptation of another program.
- Show that you understand the "work first" principle; propose training *only* as a post-employment service
- Don't bury important information – make it easy for the reviewers to find information.
- Test your proposal on outside readers.
- Check *one more time* to be sure that you have addressed all of the requirements of the SGA.

Welfare-to-Work Home Page
http://wtw.doleta.gov

Consi   derable
helpfu   l
information is available on the DOL WtW Home Page. Under *Directory of Services* there are a
number of valuable links to *Key Information*, including:

- WtW Fact Sheets,
- Common Questions and Answers,
- Regulations, Press Releases,
- Official Guidance Letters,
- Information Notices, and
- Selected News Clippings.

The *Key Information* section has links to information *For Individuals*, *For Employers*, and for the
WtW Community. Included on the Web page is a **hot button** labeled *Competitive Grants*,
connecting directly to information on Round 1 and 2 competitive grant winners, the SGA,
outreach to potential applicants, and questions and answers. Other **hot links** at the site will
connect you to virtually any WtW-related site on the Web.

If you do not have direct access to the Internet, ask your community partners if you can obtain
access through their systems, or use your public library.

Other Resources

The competitive grant application process requires that you work with your local Private Industry Council(s) (PIC). If you do not know how to contact you PIC, you can find contact information for all PICs from:

- The Internet at *http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov/ETA* (set selections for your state and for JTPA Service Delivery Areas);

- The 1998-1999 Job Training Partnership Act Directory published by the National Association of Counties (202) 393-6226.

Questions

General questions about the **competition process and the SGA** (when the application is due; how long is the consultation period for the PIC; etc.) should be directed to the USDOL Grants Office. A contact person has been assigned for each region of the country. If you have general questions, please call the person designated for your region (listed below). The Grants Office telephone number is (202) 219-7300; extension numbers for each of the regional contacts appear after their names:

- Boston and New York: Willie E. Harris, x119
- Philadelphia and Atlanta: Charlotte Adams, x135
- Chicago and Dallas: Yvonne Harrell, x139
- Kansas City and Denver: Diemle Phan, x137
- San Francisco and Seattle: Tracy Czwartacki, x133
- National Projects Covering More than One State: Mamie Williams, x130

Questions of a **technical nature** should be *faxed* to the National Grants Office at (202) 219-8739.

Final Checklist

❏ Have you completed and signed your SF-424 (Application for Federal Assistance)?

❏ Have you completed your Project Synopsis form, and included the two page executive summary?

❏ Have you completed your Budget Information Sheet and your budget narrative/ justification?

❏ Are all items on the forms complete and forms signed where necessary?

❏ Is the required documentation of consultation with the PIC or political subdivision and the State included?

❏ Is the proposal arranged in the order that is specified? Have you provided a table of contents? Are page numbers included for all relevant areas on the project synopsis form?

❏ Does your proposal address all of the selection criteria?

❏ Are all parts of the application included, identified and easily located?

❏ Have you enclosed a signed original and three copies of your completed application?

❏ Are you ensuring that your application package will be received by the deadline?

❏ Be sure to mail or hand-deliver your application by the deadline to:

U.S. Department of Labor,
Employment and Training Administration,
Division of Federal Assistance,
Attn: Ms. Mamie D. Williams, SGA/DFA 99-003
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room S4203